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SUBJECT: El Salvador December Merida Initiative Implementation Report

REF: 09 STATE 114752

¶1. The following summarizes El Salvador Merida Initiative implementation activities for December 2009.

¶2. **Prison Security Upgrades:** In December INL San Salvador completed installation of twelve body orifice scanning system (i.e. BOSS) chairs in eight correctional centers that house the majority of El Salvador's transnational street gang inmate population. The BOSS chairs, used in conjunction with earlier supplied hand-held cell phone detection units, should enable the prison system (DGCP in Spanish) and National Civilian Police (PNC) to reduce the number of cell phones, chips, chargers and other contraband smuggled into the prison system. Four cell phone chip readers recently procured by the INL Regional Gang Advisor (INL/RGA) will allow PNC gang investigators to gather useful intelligence from cell phones and chips seized from incarcerated gang members. Increased security within the prison system, coupled with improved analysis of information contained on seized cell phones and chips, should help to curb the flood of extortion calls coming from El Salvador's prisons.

¶3. **Community Policing Training:** From December 14-18 INL/RGA and INL San Salvador hosted a regional community policing course for officers from El Salvador, Belize, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Panama. Instructors from the St. Petersburg College (FL) Community Policing Institute developed the course in conjunction with INL/RGA and INL San Salvador after the instructors conducted an on-site assessment of community policing challenges in El Salvador in summer 2009. During the week-long program, held in San Salvador, the St. Petersburg Community Policing Institute instructors discussed law enforcement strategy and reviewed best practices for suppressing crime and violence at the neighborhood level. The curriculum included a day trip to the INL-funded Lourdes Model Precinct, and significant interaction with Salvadoran officials engaged in community policing. Students were required to create an operational plan addressing the principal public security issues confronting the communities in which they work. Future courses will focus on public security and community policing challenges unique to each participating Central American country.

¶4. Improved Police Equipment: INL San Salvador took delivery of 272 desktop computers procured for the PNC. This equipment provides a desperately-needed upgrade to the PNC's rudimentary IT foundation. Pending purchase of specialized software (i2, Penlink) will enable to PNC to more effectively analyze and disseminate operational information, as well as complement the PNC's expanding use of its INL-funded automated fingerprint identification system (AFIS). INL San Salvador also took delivery of two cargo vans, which are in the process of being outfitted with specialized equipment for the PNC Anti-Narcotics Division (PNC/DAN) mobile inspection team.

¶5. The Month Ahead: INL San Salvador is sponsoring hand-held cell phone detector training for the DGCP and the PNC Transnational Anti-Gang Unit (TAG) in early January. We anticipate completing procurement of equipment for additional prison security upgrades (razor wire, cell phone jammers), as well as signing an agreement to provide polygraph training and equipment to the DGCP Inspector General's Office and developing a comprehensive training agenda for newly-appointed prison staff. INL and INL/RGA are also working with the newly-arrived ATF Regional Fire Arms Advisor to organize a homicide and gun violence reduction training program, slated to begin in San Salvador in May, as well as to prepare for the

upcoming visit of an ATF assessment team.
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